

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections and objections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The Examiner is thanked for considering claims 3 and 5 to be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

It is submitted that these claims, as originally presented, are patentably distinct over the prior art cited by the Examiner, and that these claims were in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112. Changes to these claims, and the following remarks, as presented herein are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes and remarks are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicant is entitled.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9 are pending. Claims 1 and 5 are amended, and claim 3 is canceled, without prejudice. Withdrawn claims 10 and 11 are canceled in order to expedite prosecution. No new matter is added by these amendments. Support for the amended recitations in the claims is found throughout the specification. Applicant reserves the right to pursue canceled subject matter in a continuation application.

The Examiner objected to the specification. Specifically, the Examiner alleges “antecedent basis” is lacking in claim 2 for the recitation “interlocking surface means allows for an automatic release binding to be coupled therewith.” Applicant disagrees. This language finds support in claim 2 as originally filed, as well as in the specification on page 7, lines 14-21. The Examiner is respectfully reminded that the original claims

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are part of the specification and, thus, provide support for the recitations contained therein. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if the Examiner is of a contrary opinion.

Consequently, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the specification are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Bourque (U.S. Patent No. 4,674,202) in view of either Glaser (U.S. Patent No. 4,176,856) or Hickey (U.S. Patent No. 4,403,789).

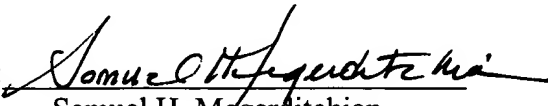
Although Applicant disagrees with the rejection, the amendment to claim 1 with the allowable subject matter of claim 3 renders the rejection moot. Therefore, claim 1, as well as those claims dependent thereon, are believed to be allowable.

Consequently, reconsideration and withdrawal of the Section 103 rejection are respectfully requested.

### **CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable, and early and favorable consideration thereof is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,  
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